

## WEI LIAO-TZU

### 1. Heavenly Offices<sup>1</sup>

King Hui of Liang inquired of Wei Liao-tzu: "Is it true that the Yellow Emperor, through punishments and Virtue,<sup>2</sup> achieved a hundred victories [without a defeat]?"

Wei Liao-tzu replied: "Punishment was employed to attack [the rebellious], Virtue was employed to preserve [the people].<sup>3</sup> This is not what is referred to as 'Heavenly Offices, [auspicious] hours and days, yin and yang, facing toward and turning your back to.' The Yellow Emperor's [victories] were a matter of human effort, that is all. Why was that?

"Now if there is a fortified city and one attacks it from the east and west but cannot take it, and attacks from the south and north but cannot take it, can it be that all four directions failed to accord with an [auspicious] moment that could be exploited? If you still cannot take it, it is because the walls are high, the moats deep, the weapons and implements fully prepared, the materials and grains accumulated in great quantities, and their valiant soldiers unified in their plans. If the wall is low, the moats shallow, and the defenses weak, then it can be taken. From this perspective, 'moments,' 'seasons,' and 'Heavenly Offices' are not as important as human effort.

"According to the *Heavenly Offices*,<sup>4</sup> 'deploying troops with water to the rear is referred to as "isolated terrain."<sup>5</sup> Deploying troops facing a long ridge is termed "abandoning the army."<sup>6</sup> When King Wu attacked King Chou of the Shang, he deployed his troops with the Chi<sup>7</sup> River behind him, facing a mountain slope. With 22,500 men he attacked King Chou's hundreds of thousands and destroyed the Shang dynasty. Yet, had not King Chou deployed in accord with the Heavenly Offices?

"The Ch'u general Kung-tzu Hsin was about to engage Ch'i in battle. At that time a comet appeared, with its tail over Ch'i. [According to such beliefs] wherever the tail pointed would be victorious, and they could not be attacked. Kung-tzu Hsin said: 'What does a comet know? Those who fight according to the comet will certainly be overturned and conquered.'<sup>8</sup> On the morrow he engaged Ch'i and greatly defeated them. The Yellow Emperor said: 'Putting spirits and ghosts first is not as good as first investigating my

own knowledge.' This means that the Heavenly Offices are nothing but human effort."<sup>9</sup>

## 2. Military Discussions

"Measure the fertility and barrenness of the earth, and then establish towns. To construct the city walls, determine the appropriate terrain.<sup>10</sup> In accord with the city walls, determine the appropriate [number of] men.<sup>11</sup> In accord with [the number of] men, determine the appropriate amount of grain. When all three have been mutually determined, then internally one can be solid in defense, and externally one can be victorious in battle.<sup>12</sup> Being victorious in battle externally and preparations<sup>13</sup> being controlled internally, victory and preparations are mutually employed,<sup>14</sup> like the halves of a tally exactly matching each other.

"Control of the army is as secretive as the [depths of] Earth, as dark and obscure as the [heights of] Heaven,<sup>15</sup> and is given birth from the nonexistent. Therefore it must be opened.<sup>16</sup> The great is not frivolous, the small is not vast.<sup>17</sup>

"One who is enlightened about prohibitions, pardons, opening,<sup>18</sup> and stopping up<sup>19</sup> will attract displaced people and bring unworked lands under cultivation.<sup>20</sup>

"When the land is broad and under cultivation, the state will be wealthy; when the people are numerous and well-ordered, the state will be governed.<sup>21</sup> When the state is wealthy and well governed, although the people do not remove the blocks [from the chariots] nor expose their armor, their awesomeness instills order on All under Heaven.<sup>22</sup> Thus it is said 'the army's victory stems from the court.'<sup>23</sup> When one is victorious without exposing his armor, it is the ruler's victory; when victory comes after deploying [the army], it is the general's victory.<sup>24</sup>

"The army cannot be mobilized out of personal anger.<sup>25</sup> If victory can be foreseen, then the troops can be raised. If victory cannot be foreseen, then [the mobilization] should be stopped. If trouble arises within a hundred *li*, do not spend more than a day mobilizing the forces. If trouble arises within a thousand *li*, do not spend more than a month mobilizing the forces. If the trouble lies within the Four Seas, do not spend more than a year mobilizing the forces.<sup>26</sup>

"As for the commanding general: Above he is not governed by Heaven, below he is not controlled by Earth, in the middle he is not governed by men. He should be composed so that he cannot be stimulated to anger. He should

be pure so that he cannot be inveigled by wealth.<sup>27</sup> Now if the mind is deranged [by emotion], the eyes are blind, and the ears are deaf—to lead men with these three perversities is difficult!

“Wherever the army ventures—whether it is along byways that wind about like sheep’s intestines, along roads as bumpy as a saw’s teeth, curling about the mountains, or entering a valley—it will be victorious. Whether deployed in a square formation or deployed in a round formation, it will be victorious.”<sup>28</sup>

“A heavy army is like the mountains, like the forests, like the rivers and great streams. A light force is like a roaring fire; like earthen walls it presses upon them, like clouds it covers them.”<sup>29</sup> They cause the enemy’s troops to be unable to disperse and those that are dispersed to be unable to reassemble.<sup>30</sup> Those on the left are unable [to rescue those on] the right, those on the right are unable [to rescue those on] the left.<sup>31</sup>

“The weapons are like a mass of trees, the [effects of the] crossbows like a goat’s horns.”<sup>32</sup> Every man, without exception, steps high and displays his courage. Casting off all doubts, fervently and determined, they go forth decisively!”

### **3. Discussion of Regulations**

“As for the military, regulations must first be established. When regulations are established first, the soldiers will not be disordered. When the soldiers are not disordered, punishments will be clear. If wherever the gongs and drums direct them a hundred men all contend; to penetrate the enemy’s ranks and cause chaos among his formations a thousand men all strive; and to overturn the enemy’s army and kill his generals ten thousand men raise their blades in unison, no one under Heaven will be able to withstand them in battle.

“In antiquity the soldiers were organized into squads of five and ten, the chariots into companies and rows. When the drums sounded and the pennants flew,<sup>33</sup> it never happened that the first to scale the walls were not outstanding state soldiers of great strength! The first to die were also always outstanding state soldiers of great strength. If the enemy suffers a loss of one man and we lose a hundred, it enriches the enemy and greatly diminishes<sup>34</sup> us! Through the ages<sup>35</sup> generals have been unable to prevent this.

“When conscripts have been assigned to the army but they run off to their native places, or flee when they approach a battle, the harm caused by the deserters is great. Through the ages generals have been unable to prevent it.

“What can kill men beyond a hundred paces are bows and arrows. What can kill a man within fifty paces are spears and halberds. When the general drums [the advance] but the officers and troops yell at each other, twist their arrows to break them, smash their spears, cradle their halberds,<sup>36</sup> and find it advantageous to go to the rear, and when the battle commences these all occur, it will be internally self-defeating. Through the ages generals have been unable to prevent them.

“Soldiers losing their squads of five and ten; chariots losing their companies and rows; unorthodox<sup>37</sup> forces abandoning their generals and fleeing; the masses also running off—these are things which generals through the ages have been unable to prevent. Now if a general can prevent these four, he will be able to traverse high mountains, cross over deep rivers, and assail strong formations. Being unable to prevent these four is like losing your boat and oars and crossing the Yangtze and Yellow rivers. It cannot be done!

“People do not take pleasure in dying, nor do they hate life, [but] if the commands and orders are clear, and the laws and regulations carefully detailed, you can make them advance. When, before [combat], rewards are made clear, and afterward punishments are made decisive, then when [the troops] issue forth they will be able to realize an advantage, and when they move they will be successful.

“Order that a company [commander]<sup>38</sup> be established for one hundred men, a Ssu-ma for one thousand men, and a general for ten thousand men. With a small number you can punish a mass, with the weak you can punish the strong. If you test my words [you will find] their techniques sufficient to ensure that within the masses of the Three Armies, if you execute a single man none will escape punishment. Fathers will not dare conceal their sons, and sons will not dare conceal their fathers, so how much the more so the citizens of the state?

“If a warrior wields a sword to strike people in the marketplace, among ten thousand people there will not be anyone who does not avoid him. If I say it is not that only one man is courageous, but that the ten thousand are unlike him, what is the reason? Being committed to dying and being committed to seeking life are not comparable. If you listen to my techniques, [you will find] they are sufficient to cause the masses of the Three Armies to become a brigand<sup>39</sup> committed to dying. No one will stand before them, no one will follow them. They will be able to come and go alone, being the army of a king or hegemon.

“Who led a mass of one hundred thousand and no one under Heaven opposed him? Duke Huan.<sup>40</sup>

“Who led a mass of seventy thousand and no one under Heaven opposed him? Wu Ch’i.

“Who led a mass of thirty thousand and no one under Heaven opposed him? Sun-tzu.

“Today among the armies led by commanders from the various feudal states, there is not one that does not reach a mass of two hundred thousand men. Yet if they are unable to succeed in establishing their merit, it is because they do not understand prohibitions, pardons, opening [the path to life], and stopping up [excessive severity]. If you make the ordinances clear so that one man will be victorious, then ten men will also thereby be victorious. If ten men can be victorious, then one hundred, one thousand, or ten thousand men can also thereby be victorious. Thus I say if you improve our weapons and equipment, nurture our martial courage, when you release [our forces] it will be like a bird attacking, like rushing down a thousand-fathom valley.”<sup>41</sup>

“Now a state that finds itself in difficulty sends its valuable treasures out with emissaries to other states, sends its beloved sons out as hostages, and cedes land along its borders in order to obtain the assistance of All under Heaven. Although the troops [coming to assist] are said to number one hundred thousand, in actuality they do not exceed several tens of thousands. When their troops come forth there are none to whom [the ruler] has not said to his commanding general: ‘Do not be beneath anyone nor be the first to fight.’”<sup>42</sup> In reality one cannot enter battle with them.

“If we measure the population within our borders, without the [system of] five no one could order them. The ordinances regulate the mass of one hundred thousand, and the king must be able to have them wear our uniforms and eat our food. If they are not victorious in battle nor stalwart in defense, it is not the fault of our people for it was internally brought on. The various feudal states under Heaven aiding us in battle are like worn-out old horses with their manes flying trying to compete with legendary swift steeds. How can they supplement our *ch’i*?

“We should employ all the resources under Heaven for our own use, we should govern with all the regulations under Heaven as our own regulations. We should revise our commands and orders and make punishments and rewards clear. We should cause that apart from engaging in agriculture there will be no means to eat, and apart from engaging in battle there will be no means to attain rank. We should cause the people to bump into each other in competing to go out to the farms and into battle. Then under Heaven we will not have any enemies! Thus I say that when a command is promulgated, an order issued, its credibility will extend throughout the state.

“If among the populace there are those who say they can vanquish the enemy, do not allow them to speak idly but absolutely test their ability to fight.

“To look at other peoples’ lands and gain them, to divide up other rulers’ subjects and nourish them, one must be able to absorb their Worthies. If you are unable to bring in and employ their Worthies but want to possess All under Heaven, you must destroy armies and slay generals. In this way, even though you may be victorious in battle, the state will grow increasingly weak. Even though you gain territory, the state will be increasingly impoverished. All this proceeds from the state’s regulations being exhausted.”

#### 4. Combat Awesomeness

“In general, [in employing] the military there are those who gain victory through the Tao; those that gain victory through awesomeness; and those that gain victory through strength. Holding careful military discussions and evaluating the enemy, causing the enemy’s *ch’i* to be lost and his forces to scatter so that even if his disposition<sup>43</sup> is complete he will not be able to employ it, this is victory through the Tao.

“Being precise about laws and regulations, making rewards and punishments clear, improving weapons and equipment, causing the people to have minds totally committed to fighting, this is victory through awesomeness.

“Destroying armies and slaying generals, mounting barbicans and firing crossbows, overwhelming the populace and seizing territory, returning only after being successful, this is victory through strength. When kings and feudal lords know these, the three ways to victory will be complete.

“Now the means by which the general fights is the people; the means by which the people fight is their *ch’i*. When their *ch’i* is substantial they will fight; when their *ch’i* has been snatched away they will run off.

“Before punishment has been applied [to the enemy], before the soldiers have clashed, the means by which one seizes the enemy are five:

1. Discussing the way to victory in the court
2. Discussing [the general] receiving his mandate<sup>44</sup>
3. Discussing crossing the borders<sup>45</sup>
4. Discussing making the moats deep and the fortifications high
5. Discussing mobilizing, deploying, and applying punitive measures [to the enemy]

“In these five cases first evaluate the enemy and afterward move. In this way you can attack their voids and seize them.

“One who excels at employing the army is able to seize men and not be seized by others. This seizing is a technique of mind. Orders [unify]<sup>46</sup> the

minds of the masses. When the masses are not understood, the orders will have to be changed frequently. When they are changed frequently, then even though orders are issued the masses will not have faith in them.<sup>47</sup>

“Thus the rule for giving commands is that small errors should not be changed, minor doubts should not be publicized. Thus when those above do not [issue] doubtful orders, the masses will not listen to two different [versions]. When actions do not have any questionable aspects, the multitude will not have divided intentions. There has never been an instance where the people did not believe the mind of their leader and were able to attain their strength.<sup>48</sup> It has never been the case that one was unable to realize their strength and yet attain their deaths in battle.

“Therefore a state must have the righteousness of the forms of etiquette [*li*], trust, familiarity, and love, and then it can exchange hunger for surfeit. The state must first have the customs of filiality, parental love, honesty, and shame, and then it can exchange death for life. When the ancients led the people they invariably placed the rites and trust first, and afterward ranks and emoluments. They put honesty and shame first, and punishments and fines afterward; close relationships and love first, and imposed constraints on their persons afterward.<sup>49</sup>

“Thus those who engage in combat must take leading in person as their foundation in order to incite the masses and officers, just as the mind controls the four limbs. If their minds are not incited, then the officers will not die for honor. When the officers will not die for honor, then the masses will not do battle.

“In order to stimulate the soldiers, the people’s material welfare cannot but be ample. The ranks of nobility, the degree of relationship in death and mourning, the activities by which the people live cannot but be made evident. One must govern the people in accord with their means to life, and make distinctions clear in accord with the people’s activities. The fruits of the field and their salaries, the feasting of relatives [through the rites of] eating and drinking, the mutual encouragement in the village ceremonies, mutual assistance in death and the rites of mourning, sending off and greeting the troops—these are what stimulate the people.<sup>50</sup>

“Ensure that the members of the squads of five and ten are like relatives, the members of the companies and their officers<sup>51</sup> like friends. When they stop they will be like a solid, encircling wall, when they move like the wind and rain. The chariots will not wheel to the rear, the soldiers will not turn about. This is the Way to establish the foundation for combat.

“Land is the means for nourishing the populace; [fortified] cities the means for defending the land; combat the means for defending the cities.

Thus if one concentrates on plowing the people will not be hungry; if one concentrates on defense the land will not be endangered; if one concentrates on combat the cities will not be encircled. These three were the fundamental concerns of the Former Kings, and among them military affairs were the most urgent.

“Therefore the Former Kings concentrated on five military affairs: When the store of accumulated foodstuffs is not substantial, the soldiers do not set out. When rewards and salaries are not generous, the people are not stimulated. When martial warriors are not selected, the masses will not be strong. When weapons and implements are not prepared, their strength will not be great. When punishments and rewards are not appropriate, the masses will not respect them. If one emphasizes these five, then at rest [the army] will be able to defend any place it secures, and in motion it will be able to attain its objectives.<sup>52</sup>

“As for remaining within the state and going forth to attack, you want those remaining behind to be ‘heavy.’ In deploying your troops you want the formations to be solid. In launching an attack you want to make the utmost effort. And in going forth to battle you want to be of one mind.

“The state of a [true] king enriches the people; the state of a hegemon enriches the officers. A state that merely survives enriches the high officials, and a state that is about to perish enriches its own granaries and storehouses. This is termed ‘the top being full while the bottom leaks.’ When disaster comes there will be no means to effect a rescue.

“Thus I say that if you raise the Worthy and give responsibility to the capable, [even] without the time being propitious affairs will still be advantageous. If you make the laws clear and are cautious in issuing orders, then without performing divination with the tortoise shell or milfoil you will obtain good fortune. If you esteem achievement and nurture effort, without praying you will attain blessings. Moreover it is said, ‘The seasons of Heaven are not as good as the advantages of Earth. Advantages of Earth are not as good as harmony among men.’ What Sages esteem is human effort, that is all!

“Now when the army is toiling on the march, the general must establish himself [as an example]. In the heat he does not set up an umbrella; in the cold he does not wear heavier clothes. On difficult terrain he must dismount and walk. Only after the army’s well is finished does he drink. Only after the army’s food is cooked does he eat. Only after the army’s ramparts are complete does he rest. He must personally experience the same toil and respite. In this fashion even though the army is in the field for a long time, it will be neither old nor exhausted.”<sup>53</sup>



## 5. Tactical Balance of Power in Attacks

“The military is victorious through being quiet; a state is victorious through being united.<sup>54</sup> One whose strength is divided will be weak; one whose mind has doubts will be turned against.<sup>55</sup> Now when one’s strength is weak, advancing and retreating will not be bold, and pursuing an enemy will not result in capturing anyone. Generals, commanders, officers, and troops should be a single body both in action and at rest. But if the commander’s mind is already doubtful and the troops inclined to rebellion, then even though a plan has been decided on they will not move, or if movement has been initiated they cannot be controlled. When different mouths speak empty words, the general lacks the proper demeanor, and the troops have not had constant tests [during training], if they set out to attack they will inevitably be defeated. This is what is referred to as a ‘hasty, belligerent army.’ It is inadequate for engaging in warfare.

“Now the general is the mind of the army, while all those below are the limbs and joints. When the mind moves in complete sincerity, then the limbs and joints are invariably strong. When the mind moves in doubt, then the limbs and joints are invariably contrary. Now if the general does not govern his mind, the troops will not move as his limbs. Then even though the army might be victorious, it will be a lucky victory, not [the result of] the tactical imbalance of power in the attack.<sup>56</sup>

“Now the people do not have two things they fear equally. If they fear us then they will despise the enemy; if they fear the enemy they will despise us. The one who is despised will be defeated; the one who establishes his awesomeness will be victorious. In general, when the general is able to implement the Way [to awesomeness],<sup>57</sup> his commanders will fear him. When the commanders fear their general, the people will fear their commanders. When the people fear their commanders, then the enemy will fear the people. For this reason those who would know the Tao of victory and defeat must first know about the balance of power of ‘fearing’ and ‘despising.’

“Now one who is not loved and cherished in the minds [of his men] cannot be employed by me; one who is not respected and feared in the minds [of his men] cannot be appointed by me.<sup>58</sup> Love follows from below, awesomeness is established from above. If they love [their general] they will not have divided minds; if they are awestruck [by their general] they will not be rebellious. Thus excelling at generalship is merely a question of love and awesomeness.

“One who engages in battle but does not invariably win cannot be said to ‘do battle.’ One who attacks an enemy but does not invariably seize them cannot be said to have ‘attacked.’<sup>59</sup> If it were otherwise, their punishments and rewards were not sufficiently trusted. Credibility [must be established] before the moment of need; affairs [must be managed] before the first signs appear. Thus the masses, when once assembled, should not be fruitlessly dispersed. When the army goes forth it should not return empty-handed. They will seek the enemy as if searching for a lost son; they will attack the enemy as if rescuing a drowning man.

“One who occupies ravines lacks the mind to do battle.<sup>60</sup> One who lightly provokes a battle lacks fullness of *ch’i*. One who is belligerent in battle lacks soldiers capable of victory.

“Now in general, one who presumes upon righteousness to engage in warfare values initiating the conflict. One who contends out of personal animosity responds only when it is unavoidable. Even though hatreds have formed and troops have been mobilized, await them and value acting after them.<sup>61</sup> During the conflict you must await their advance.<sup>62</sup> When there is a lull you must prepare [against sudden attacks].

“There are armies that are victorious in the court; those that achieve victory in the plains and fields; and those that attain victory in the marketplace. There are those who fight and gain victory; those that submit and are lost; and those that are fortunate not to be defeated, as in cases where the enemy is unexpectedly frightened and victory is gained by a turn of events. This sort of victory ‘by turn of events’ is said not to be a complete victory. What is not a complete victory lacks any claim to having effected a tactical imbalance in power. Thus the enlightened ruler, on the day for the attack, will [concentrate on] having the drums and horns sound in unison and regulating their armed might. Without seeking victory he will then be victorious.

“Among armies there are those who abandon their defenses, abolish their awesomeness, and are yet victorious because they have methods. There are those who have early established the use of their weapons so that their response to the enemy is all-encompassing and their general leadership is perfected.

“Thus for five men there is a squad leader, for ten men a lieutenant, for one hundred men a company captain, for one thousand men a battalion commander, and for ten thousand men a general. [This organization] is already all-encompassing, already perfected. If a man dies in the morning, another will replace him that morning; if a man dies in the evening, another will replace him that evening. [The wise ruler] weighs the tactical balance of power

with the enemy, evaluates the generals, and only thereafter mobilizes the army.

“Thus in general, when assembling an army a thousand *li* away, ten days are required and when a hundred *li*, one day, while the assembly point should be the enemy’s border.<sup>63</sup> When the troops have assembled and the general has arrived, the army should penetrate deeply into their territory, sever their roads, and occupy their large cities and large towns. Have the troops ascend the walls and press the enemy into endangered positions. Have the several units of men and women each press the enemy in accord with the configuration of the terrain and attack any strategic barriers. If you occupy [the terrain around] a city or town and sever the various roads about it, follow up by attacking the city itself. If the enemy’s generals and armies are unable to believe in each other, the officers and troops unable to be in harmony, and there are those unaffected by punishments, we will defeat them. Before the rescue party has arrived a city will have already surrendered.

“If fords and bridges have not yet been constructed,<sup>64</sup> strategic barriers not yet repaired, dangerous points in the city walls not yet fortified, and the iron caltrops not yet set out, then even though they have a fortified city, they do not have any defense!

“If the troops from distant forts have not yet entered [the city], the border guards and forces in other states<sup>65</sup> not yet returned, then even though they have men, they do not have any men! If the six domesticated animals have not yet been herded in, the five grains not yet harvested, the wealth and materials for use not yet collected, then even though they have resources they do not have any resources!

“Now when a city is empty and void and its resources are exhausted, we should take advantage of this vacuity to attack them. The Art [of War]<sup>66</sup> says, ‘They go out alone, they come in alone. Even before the enemy’s men can cross blades with them, they have attained [victory].’ This is what is meant.”

## **6. Tactical Balance of Power in Defense**

“In general, when the defenders go forth, if they do not [occupy] the outer walls of the cities nor the borderlands<sup>67</sup> and when they retreat do not [establish] watchtowers and barricades for the purpose of defensive warfare, they do not excel [at defense]. The valiant heroes and brave stalwarts, sturdy armor and sharp weapons, powerful crossbows and strong arrows should all be within the outer walls, and then all [the grain stored outside] in the earthen cellars and granaries collected, and the buildings [outside the outer

walls] broken down and brought into the fortifications. This will force the attackers to expend ten or one hundred times the energy, while the defenders will not expend half of theirs.<sup>68</sup> The enemy aggressors will be harmed greatly, yet generals through the ages have not known this.

“Now the defenders should not neglect their strategic points. The rule for defending a city wall is that for every *chang* [ten feet], you should employ ten men to defend it—artisans and cooks not being included. Those who go out [to fight] do not defend the city; those that defend the city do not go out [to fight]. One man [on defense] can oppose ten men [besieging them]; ten men can oppose one hundred men; one hundred men can oppose one thousand men; one thousand men can oppose ten thousand men. Thus constructing [a city’s] interior and exterior walls by accumulating loose soil [and tamping it down]<sup>69</sup> does not wantonly expend the strength of the people for it is truly for defense.

“If a wall is one thousand *chang*, then ten thousand men should defend<sup>70</sup> it. The moats should be deep and wide, the walls solid and thick, the soldiers and people prepared,<sup>71</sup> firewood and foodstuffs provided, the crossbows stout and arrows strong, the spears and halberds well suited. This is the method for making defense solid.

“If the attackers are not less than a mass of at least a hundred thousand<sup>72</sup> while [the defenders] have an army outside that will certainly come to the rescue, it is a city that must be defended. If there is no external army to inevitably rescue them, then it is not a city that must be defended.

“Now if the walls are solid and rescue certain, then even stupid men and ignorant women will all—without exception—protect the walls,<sup>73</sup> exhausting their resources and blood for them. For a city to withstand a siege for one year, the [strength of]<sup>74</sup> the defenders should exceed that of the attackers and the [strength of] the rescue force exceed that of the defenders.

“Now if the walls are solid but rescue uncertain, then the stupid men and ignorant women—all without exception—will defend the parapets, but they will weep. This is normal human emotion. Even if you thereupon open the grain reserves in order to relieve and pacify them, you cannot stop it. You must incite the valiant heroes and brave stalwarts with their sturdy armor, sharp weapons, strong crossbows, and stout arrows to exert their strength together in the front and the young, weak, crippled, and ill to exert their strength together in the rear.<sup>75</sup>

“If an army of a hundred thousand is encamped beneath the city walls, the rescue force must break open [the siege], and the city’s defenders must go out to attack. When they sally forth they must secure the critical positions [along the way]. But the rescue forces to the rear [of the besiegers] should not sever

their supply lines, and the forces within and without should respond to each other.<sup>76</sup>

“In this sort of rescue display a half-hearted commitment. If you display a half-hearted commitment, it will overturn<sup>77</sup> the enemy and we can await them. They will put their stalwarts in the rear, and place the old in the forefront. Then the enemy will not be able to advance, nor be able to stop the defenders [from breaking out]. This is what is meant by the ‘tactical balance of power in defense.’

## **7. Twelve Insults<sup>78</sup>**

“Awesomeness lies in<sup>79</sup> not making changes. Beneficence lies in according with the seasons.<sup>80</sup> Perceptivity<sup>81</sup> lies in [promptly] responding to affairs. [Success in] warfare lies in controlling *ch'i*. [Skill in] attacks lies in fathoming externals.<sup>82</sup> Defense lies in manipulating external appearance. Not being excessive lies in measuring and counting. Not encountering difficulty lies in foresight and preparation. Being cautious lies in respecting the small. Wisdom lies in controlling the large. Eliminating harm lies in being decisive. Gaining the masses lies in deferring to other men.

“Regret arises from relying on what is doubtful. Evil lies in excessive executions. Prejudiced views come from frequently following one’s own desires. Inauspicious events arise from detesting to hear about one’s errors. Extravagance lies in exhausting the people’s resources. Unenlightenment consists in accepting advice [which] separates you [from reality]. Being insubstantial stems from lightly initiating movements. Stubbornness and ignorance lie in separating yourself from the Worthy. Misfortune lies in loving profits. Harm lies in drawing common men near. Disaster lies in lacking any place to defend. Danger lies in lacking [clear] commands and orders.”

## **8. Martial Plans**

“In general, [when employing] the military do not attack cities that have not committed transgressions or slay men who have not committed offenses.<sup>83</sup> Whoever kills people’s fathers and elder brothers; whoever profits himself with the riches and goods of other men; whoever makes slaves of the sons and daughters of other men is in all cases a brigand. For this reason the military provides the means to execute the brutal and chaotic and to stop the unrighteous.<sup>84</sup> Whenever the army is applied the farmers do not leave their occupations in the fields, the merchants do not depart from their shops, and the officials do not leave their offices, due to the martial plans<sup>85</sup> all proceed-

ing from one man.<sup>86</sup> Thus even without the forces bloodying their blades, All under Heaven give their allegiance.

“A state of ten thousand chariots [concentrates on] both agriculture and warfare. A state of one thousand chariots [focuses] on rescuing [others] and on defending [itself].<sup>87</sup> A state of one hundred chariots [commits itself] to serving and supporting [other states].<sup>88</sup> Those engaged in agriculture and warfare do not seek any authority [*ch'üan*] outside themselves; those who rescue others and defend themselves do not seek aid outside themselves; and those who serve and support other states do not seek material resources outside themselves. Now if [one's resources] are neither sufficient to go forth to wage battle nor adequate to remain within the borders and defend the state, one must correct [the insufficiency] with markets. Markets are the means to provide for both offensive and defensive warfare. If a state of ten thousand chariots lacks states of one thousand chariots to assist it, it must have markets able to furnish one hundred chariots.

“In general, executions provide the means to illuminate the martial. If by executing one man the entire army will quake, kill him. If by rewarding<sup>89</sup> one man ten thousand men will rejoice, reward him. In executing, value the great; in rewarding, value the small. If someone should be killed, then even though he is honored and powerful, he must be executed, for this will be punishment that reaches the pinnacle. When rewards extend down to the cowherds and stable boys, this is rewards flowing down [to the lowest]. Now the ability to implement punishments that reach the pinnacle, and rewards that flow down [to the lowest], is the general's martial charisma. Thus rulers value their generals.<sup>90</sup>

“Now when the commanding general takes up the drum, brandishes the drumsticks, and approaches danger for a decisive battle so that the soldiers meet and the naked blades clash—if he drums the advance and they respond to wrest the victory, then he will be rewarded for his achievements and his fame will be established. If he drums the advance but they fail, then he himself will die and the state will perish. For this reason survival<sup>91</sup> and extinction, security and danger all lie at the end of the drumstick! How can one not value the general?

“Now taking up the drums and wielding the drumsticks, having the soldiers collide and the blades clash so that the ruler achieves great success through military affairs I do not find to be difficult. The ancients said, ‘Attacking without chariots with protective covering,<sup>92</sup> defending without equipment such as the caltrops, this is what is meant by an army that does not excel at anything!’ Looking without seeing and listening without hearing stem from the state not having markets.

“Now markets are offices for sundry goods.”<sup>93</sup> [The government should] buy items which are cheap in the market and sell those that have grown expensive in order to restrain the aristocrats and people. People [only] eat one *tou*<sup>94</sup> of grain, and horses eat three *tou* of beans, so why is it the people have a famished look and the horses an emaciated appearance? The markets have goods to deliver, but the office lacks a controller. Now if you raise the best-trained army under Heaven but do not manage the sundry goods, this is not what is referred to as ‘being able to conduct warfare.’

“[To retain men in service] straight from their mobilization to the time when their armor and helmets have become worm infested, they must be men whom we can employ. [This is like] a bird of prey pursuing a sparrow which flies into a man’s arms or enters someone’s dwelling. It is not that the bird is casting away its life, but that to the rear there is something to fear.

“When T’ai Kung Wang was seventy, he butchered cows at Ch’ao Ko and sold food in Meng Chin. He was more than seventy years old, but the ruler did not listen to him, and people all referred to him as a mad fellow. Then when he met King Wen he commanded a mass of thirty thousand and with one battle All under Heaven was settled. Without his understanding or martial plans, how could they have achieved this unification? Thus it is said, ‘If a good horse has a whip, a distant road can be traversed; if Worthies and men of rank unite together, the Great Tao can be illuminated.’

“When King Wu attacked King Chou, the army forded [the Yellow River] at Meng Chin. On the right was the king’s pennant, on the left the ax of punishment, together with three hundred warriors committed to die and thirty thousand fighting men. King Chou’s formation deployed several hundred thousand men, with [the infamous ministers] Fei Liao and O Lai personally leading the halberdiers and ax bearers. Their lines stretched across a hundred *li*. King Wu did not exhaust the warriors or people, the soldiers did not bloody their blades, but they conquered the Shang dynasty and executed King Chou. There was nothing auspicious nor abnormal; it was merely a case of perfecting oneself, or not perfecting oneself, in human affairs.

“Generals of the present generation investigate ‘singular days’ and ‘empty mornings,’ divine about Hsien-ch’ih,<sup>95</sup> interpret full and disastrous days, accord with tortoise shell augury, look for the auspicious and baleful, and observe the changes of the planets, constellations, and winds—wanting to thereby gain victory and establish their success. I view this as very difficult!

“Now the commanding general is not governed by Heaven above, controlled by Earth below, nor governed by men in the middle. Thus weapons are evil implements. Conflict is a contrary virtue. The post of general is an office of death. Thus only when it cannot be avoided does one employ

them.<sup>96</sup> There is no Heaven above, no Earth below, no ruler to the rear, and no enemy in the front. The [unified] army of one man is like the wolf and tiger, like the wind and rain, like thunder and lightning. Shaking and mysterious, All under Heaven are terrified by it.

“The army that would be victorious is like water. Now water is the softest and weakest of things, but whatever it collides with—such as hills and mounds—will be collapsed by it for no other reason than its nature is concentrated and its attack is totally committed.<sup>97</sup> Now if one has the sharpness of the famous sword Mo Yeh, the toughness of rhinoceros hide [for armor], the masses of the Three Armies, and orthodox and unorthodox methods, then under All Heaven no one can withstand him in battle.

“Thus it is said that if you raise the Worthy and employ the talented, even if the hour and day [are not auspicious], your affairs will still be advantageous. If you make the laws clear and are cautious about orders, without divining with the tortoise shell or milfoil you will obtain propitious results. If you honor achievement and nurture effort, without praying you will obtain good fortune. It is also said that ‘the seasons of Heaven are not as good as the advantages of Earth; the advantages of Earth are not as good as harmony among men.’ The Sages of antiquity stressed human effort, that is all.

“When Wu Ch’i engaged Ch’in in battle, wherever he encamped the army did not flatten the paths between the fields. Young saplings provided protective covering against the frost and dew. Why did he act like this? Because he did not place himself higher than other men. If you want men to die, you do not require them to perform [perfunctory acts of] respect. If you want men to exhaust their strength, you do not hold them responsible for performing the rites. Thus, in antiquity an officer wearing a helmet and armor did not bow, showing people that he is not troubled by anything.<sup>98</sup> To annoy people yet require them to die, to exhaust their strength, from antiquity until today has never been heard of.

“When the commanding general receives his mandate, he forgets his family. When he commands the army and they encamp in the field, he forgets those close to him. When he takes up the drumsticks and drums [the advance], he forgets himself.

“When Wu Ch’i approached the time for battle, his attendants offered their swords. Wu Ch’i said: ‘The general takes sole control of the flags and drums, and that is all. Approaching hardship he decides what is doubtful, controls the troops, and directs their blades. Such is the work of the general. Bearing a single sword, that is not a general’s affair.’

“When the Three Armies have assumed formation, they should advance for a day and [on the next day] make a forced march to complete a total of



three days' distance.<sup>99</sup> Beyond three days' distance they should be like unblocking the source of a river.<sup>100</sup> Observing the enemy in front, one should employ their strength. If the enemy is white, then whiten them; if they are red, then redden them.<sup>101</sup>

"When Wu Ch'i engaged Ch'in in battle, before the armies clashed one man—unable to overcome his courage—went forth to slay two of the enemy and return with their heads. Wu Ch'i immediately ordered his decapitation. An army commander remonstrated with him, saying: 'This is a skilled warrior. You cannot execute him.' Wu Ch'i said: 'There is no question that he is a skilled warrior. But it is not what I ordered.' He had him executed."<sup>102</sup>

## 9. The General as a Law Official<sup>103</sup>

"In general, a general is an officer of the law, the ruler of the ten thousand things. It cannot be the personal domain of one man. When it is not the personal domain of one man, the ten thousand things will all come [of themselves] and be governed there, the ten thousand things will all come and be commanded there.

"The perfected man [*chün-tzu*] does not stop criminals more than five paces away. Even though they may shoot at him with barbed arrows, he does not pursue them. He excels at discovering the nature of a criminal's offense. Without relying on thorn branches, he can obtain a complete understanding of the offender's situation.<sup>104</sup>

"If you flog a person's back, brand his ribs, or compress his fingers in order to question him about the nature of his offense, even a state hero could not withstand this cruelty and would falsely implicate himself.<sup>105</sup>

"There is a saying in our age: 'One who has thousands of pieces of gold will not die; one who has hundreds of pieces of gold will not suffer corporeal punishment.' If you listen to my techniques and try them in practice, then even a person with the wisdom of Yao or Shun will not be able to affect a word [of the charge against him], nor one with ten thousand pieces of gold be able to use the smallest silver piece [to escape punishment].

"At present those in prison awaiting judgment number no less than several tens in the smallest gaols, no less than several hundred in the middle-sized jails, and no less than several thousand in the largest prisons. Ten men entangle one hundred men in their affairs; one hundred men drag in one thousand; and one thousand trap ten thousand. Those that have become entangled are parents and brothers; next relatives by marriage; and next those who are acquaintances and old friends. For this reason the farmers all leave their occupations in the fields, the merchants depart from their stores, and the officials

leave their posts.<sup>106</sup> These good people have all been dragged in because of the nature of our criminal proceedings. The *Art of War* says: 'When an army of ten thousand goes forth, its daily expense is a thousand pieces of gold.'<sup>107</sup> Now when there are ten thousand good people thus entangled and imprisoned, yet the ruler is unable to investigate the situation—I take it to be dangerous!"

## 10. The Source of Offices

"Bureaucratic offices are the means to control affairs and [are] the foundation of administration. Regulations which divide the people into four groups according to their occupations are the parameters of administration.<sup>108</sup> Honor, rank, riches, and salaries must be appropriately determined for they are the embodiment of nobility and humbleness. Treating the good well and punishing the evil, rectifying the laws for organizing the people, and collecting taxes and impositions are implements for governing the people.<sup>109</sup> Making land distributions equitable and restraining taxes and other impositions on the people provide measure to what is levied and bestowed. Regulating the artisans and [ordering] the preparation of implements for use is the contribution of the master artisans.<sup>110</sup> Dividing the territory and occupying the strategic points is the work of eliminating oddities and stopping licentiousness. Preserving the laws, investigating affairs, and making decisions are the roles of subordinates. Illuminating the laws and examining their application are functions of the ruler. Illuminating the duties of the bureaucrats, setting responsibilities as light or heavy—these fall under the authority [*ch'üan*] of the ministers and ruler.<sup>111</sup>

"Making rewards and bestowals clear, being strict in executing and punishing are methods for stopping evil. Being cautious about opening and closing and preserving the single Tao are the essentials of government.<sup>112</sup> When [information] from below reaches to high and [the concerns of] high penetrate to below, this is the most sensitive of perceptions. By knowing the extent of the state's resources, you can plan to use the surplus.<sup>113</sup> Knowing the weakness of others is [the way] to embody strength; knowing the movements of others is [the way] to determine quietness.<sup>114</sup> Offices are divided into the civil and the martial, and only the ruler exercises power over both.

"The ceremonial vessels are all regulated for the Son of Heaven's convocation. When itinerant persuaders and spies have no means [to gain entrance], this is the technique for rectifying discussions. The feudal lords have their rites for honoring the Son of Heaven, and rulers and their people—generation after generation—continue to acknowledge the king's mandate [to rule].

If someone changes or creates new rites, alters what is normal, or contravenes the king's illustrious Virtue, then in accord with the *li* [rites] the king can attack them.<sup>115</sup>

“Officials with no affairs to administer, a ruler without rank or rewards [that need to be] bestowed, a populace without criminal cases or lawsuits, a state without traders or merchants<sup>116</sup>—how perfected the king's rule! What I have so clearly proposed should be well heeded by your Majesty.”

## 11. Governing the Foundation

“In general, what is the Way to govern men? I say that without the five grains<sup>117</sup> you have nothing to fill their stomachs, without silk and hemp nothing to cover their form. Thus to fill their stomachs there are grains, and to cover their form there is thread. Husbands work at weeding and plowing, wives at weaving. If the people do not have secondary occupations, then there will be goods accumulated in the storehouses. The men should not engrave nor make decorative carving; the women should not embroider nor do decorative stitching.

“[Carved] wooden vessels emit secretions, [engraved] metal utensils smell offensive. The Sage drinks from an earthen [vessel] and eats from an earthen [vessel]. Thus when clay is formed to make utensils there is no waste under Heaven. Today [people think] the nature of metal and wood is not cold for they embroider their clothes [with them]. The original nature of horses and oxen is to eat grass and drink water, but they give them beans and grains. This is governing which has lost its foundation, and it would be appropriate to establish regulations to control it.

“If in the spring and summer the men go out to the southern fields, and in the fall and winter the women work at weaving cloth, the people will not be impoverished. Today, when their short, coarse clothing does not even cover their bodies nor the dregs of wine and husks of grain fill their stomachs, [the foundation] of government has been lost.

“In antiquity the land was not [classified] as fertile or barren, the people were not [classified] as diligent or lazy. How could the ancients have attained this, how could we have lost it now? The men do not finish plowing their fields, the women daily break their shuttles, so how could they not be hungry and cold? Probably, the administration of the ancients was fully effected, while that of today stops [before thorough implementation].

“Now what I term ‘governing well’ means causing the people not to have any selfish interests. If the people do not have selfish interests, then All under Heaven will be one family. In the absence of private plowing and weaving, they will suffer the cold together, they will experience hunger together. Then

even if they have ten sons they will not have [the expense of] even an extra bowl of rice, while if they have one son their expenses will not be reduced by even one bowl. Thus where would there be any clamoring and drunken indulgence to ruin the good people?

“When the people stimulate each other to frivolity and extravagance, the misfortunes of the desiring mind and of the competition to seize [things] arise. Perversity begins with one fellow, and then the people seek to selfishly accumulate some extra food and have some stored wealth. If the people then commit a single offense and you arrest them and impose corporeal punishments to control them, how is one acting as the ruler of the people? Those that excel at governing take hold of the regulations, causing the people not to have any selfish interests. When those below do not dare to be selfish, there will not be any who commit evil.

“Return to the foundation, accord with principle, have all issue forth from one Tao, and then the desiring mind will be eliminated. Competition will be stopped, the jails will be empty, the fields full, and the grains plentiful. You will settle the people and embrace the distant. Then outside your borders there will not be any difficulty under Heaven, while within the state there will be neither violence nor turbulence. This is the perfection of administration.

“The azure sky—no one knows its extremity! Of the ancient emperors and Sage kings, who should be your model? Ages that have passed cannot be regained, future ages cannot be awaited. Seek them in yourself.

“There are four qualities for one referred to as the Son of Heaven: ‘Spiritual enlightenment,’ ‘display of brilliance,’<sup>118</sup> ‘vast discourse,’<sup>119</sup> and ‘being without enemies.’ These are the aspects of the Son of Heaven.

“Wild animals are not used for sacrificial offerings, miscellaneous studies do not make a scholar of attainment. Today people say: ‘The hundred *li* of the sea cannot quench one man’s [uncontrolled] thirst; a spring three feet deep can slake the thirst of the Three Armies.’ I say: ‘Desire is born from lack of measure, perversity is born from lacking prohibitions.’ The highest ruler transforms in spiritlike fashion, the next relies on things, the lowest relies on not taking the people away from their seasonal work nor seizing the people’s wealth. Now prohibitions must be completed through the martial, rewards must be completed through the civil.”

## **12. Tactical Balance of Power in Warfare**

“The Art of War<sup>120</sup> states: ‘One thousand men provide the means to exercise the tactical balance of power [*ch’üan*], ten thousand men constitute martial prowess. If you apply the force of tactical power to the enemy first, he will

not be able to commit in strength. If you apply martial prowess first, the enemy will not be able to engage you with his full awesomeness.' Thus the army values being first. If it is victorious in this, then it will conquer the enemy. If it is not victorious in this, then it will not conquer them.

"Now when we go, they come; when we come, they go. These mutually produce victory and defeat. The pattern of battle is thus.

"Now essential sincerity lies in spiritual enlightenment. The tactical balance of power [*ch'üan*] lies in the extremities of the Tao. If you have something, pretend not to have it; if you lack something, appear to have it.<sup>121</sup> Then how can the enemy trust the appearance?

"The reason the Former Kings are still heard about is that they entrusted the upright with responsibility and eliminated the deceitful. They always preserved their benevolent and congenial hearts but were decisive, without delaying, in effecting punishments. One who understands the Tao of Warfare will invariably first plan against the defeats which arise from not knowing where to stop. Why must one always advance to be successful? If you advance too lightly and seek to engage the enemy in battle, should they—on the contrary—plan to stop your going forth, the enemy will control the victory. Thus the Art of War says: 'If they seek us, pursue them; when you see them, attack. When the aggressors dare not oppose us, press the attack, and they will inevitably lose their tactical power.'<sup>122</sup>

"Those from whom [the initiative] has been taken have no *ch'i*; those who are afraid are unable to mount a defense; those who have suffered defeat have no men.<sup>123</sup> They are all cases of an army lacking the Tao [of the military]. When you decide to go forth and have no doubts, then follow your plan. When you rob the enemy [of his plans] and still no one confronts you, press the attack home. If you can see clearly and occupy the high ground, then overawe them [into submission]. This is the pinnacle of the Tao of the military.

"Those who are unguarded in their discussion can be clandestinely listened to. Those who come forth to insult and taunt [your forces] without proper discipline can be destroyed. Those whose attack is like water rushing forth, like lightning striking can throw their army into chaos.<sup>124</sup> You must settle those [of your troops who are] in crisis, eliminate their worries, and decide matters through wisdom. Be superior to the enemy through discussions in the court; be more majestic and severe than they through discussions on bestowing the mandate [of command]; and arouse their fighting spirit through discussions of crossing the enemy's borders.<sup>125</sup> Then the enemy state can be forced to submit without fighting."

### **13. Orders for Severe Punishments**

“If a general commanding one thousand men or more retreats from battle, surrenders his defenses, or abandons his terrain and deserts his troops, he is termed a ‘state brigand.’ He should be executed, his family exterminated, his name expunged from the registers, his ancestral graves broken open, his bones exposed in the marketplace, and his male and female children pressed into government servitude. If the commander of one hundred or more men retreats from battle, surrenders his defenses, or abandons his terrain and deserts his troops, he is termed an ‘army brigand.’ He should be executed, his family exterminated, and his male and female children pressed into government servitude.

“If you cause the people to fear heavy punishments within the state, then outside the state they will regard the enemy lightly. Thus the Former Kings made the regulations and measures clear before making their awesomeness and punishments heavy. When punishments are heavy, then they will fear them within the state. When they fear them within the state, then they will be stalwart outside it.”

### **14. Orders for the Squads of Five**

“Within the army the regulations for organization should be as follows: Five men comprise a squad of five, with all the members being mutually responsible for each other. Ten men comprise a double squad of ten, with all the members being mutually responsible for each other. Fifty men compose a platoon, with all the members being mutually responsible for each other. One hundred men comprise a company, with all the members being mutually responsible for each other.

“If a member of the squad of five violates an order or commits an offense, should the others report it their punishment will be remitted. If they know about it but do not report it, then the entire squad will be punished. If a member of the double squad of ten violates an order or commits an offense, should the others report it their punishment will be remitted. If they know about it but do not report it, then the entire double squad will be punished. If a member of a platoon violates an order or commits an offense, should the others report it their punishment will be remitted. If they know about it but do not report it, then the entire platoon will be punished. If a member of a company violates an order or commits an offense, should the others report it

their punishment will be remitted. If they know about it but do not expose him, the entire company will be punished.

“All the officers—from the level of the double squad of ten up to the generals of the right and left, superiors and inferiors—are mutually responsible for each other. If someone violates an order or commits an offense, those that report it will be spared from punishment, while those who know about it but do not report it will all share the same offense.

“Now when the [members of the] squads of five and ten are mutually bonded and the upper and lower ranks mutually linked, no perversity will remain undiscovered, no offense will remain unreported. Fathers will not be able to cover for their sons, older brothers will not be able to conceal their younger brothers. How much less so will the people of the state, living and eating together, be able to violate orders and conceal each other?”

## **15. Orders for Segmenting and Blocking Off Terrain**

“The Central, Left, Right, Forward, and Rear armies all have their segmented terrain—each surrounded on all four sides by temporary walls—with no passage or communication among them permitted.

“The general has his segmented terrain; the regimental commander has his segmented terrain; and the company<sup>126</sup> commander has his segmented terrain. They should all construct ditches and sluices and make the orders blocking [communications] explicit so that it is impossible for someone who is not a member of [the company of] one hundred to pass through. If someone who is not a member [of the company] of one hundred enters, then the commander should execute him.<sup>127</sup> If he fails to execute him, he will share the offense with him.

“Along the roads crisscrossing the encampment, set up administrative posts<sup>128</sup> every 120 paces. Measure the men and the terrain. The road posts should be within sight of each other. Prohibit crossing over the roads and clear them. If a soldier does not have a tally or token issued by a general or other commanding officer, he cannot pass through. Wood gatherers, fodder seekers, and animal herders all form and move in squads of five. If they are not moving in squads of five, they cannot cross through. If an officer does not have a token, if the soldiers are not in squads of five, [the guards] at the crossing gates should execute them. If anyone oversteps the demarcation lines, execute him. Thus if within the army no one contravenes orders nor vi-

olates the prohibitions, then without there will not be any perversity that is not caught.”

## **16. Orders for Binding the Squads of Five**

“The orders which bind the squad of five state: ‘Five men comprise the squad of five. They collectively receive a tally from command headquarters. If [in battle] they lose men but capture [or kill] an equivalent number of the enemy, they negate each other. If they capture members of an enemy squad without losing anyone themselves, they will be rewarded. If they lose members without capturing [or killing] equal numbers of the enemy, they will be killed and their families exterminated.

“‘If they lose their squad leader but capture a squad leader, the two negate each other. If they capture a squad leader without losing their own, they will be rewarded. If they lose their squad leader without capturing an enemy squad leader, they will be killed and their families exterminated. However, if they rejoin the battle and take the head of a squad leader, then their punishment will be lifted.

“‘If they lose their general but capture [or kill] one, the two negate each other. If they capture a general without losing their own, they will be rewarded. If they lose their general and do not kill an enemy general, they should be considered according to the Law for Abandoning Their Positions and Fleeing.’<sup>129</sup>

“The Law for Battlefield Executions states: ‘The leader of a double squad of ten can execute the other nine. A company commander can execute the double squad leaders. The general of one thousand men can execute company commanders. The general of ten thousand men can execute the general of one thousand men. The generals of the Armies of the Left and Right can execute the generals of ten thousand men. The Grand General has no one he cannot execute.’”

## **17. Orders for Regulating the Troops**

“To regulate the troops, employ the orders for regulating them to segment them into three [armies]. The Army of the Left will have green flags, and the troops will wear green feathers.<sup>130</sup> The Army of the Right will have white flags, and the troops will wear white feathers. The Central Army will have yellow flags, and the troops will wear yellow feathers.



“The troops will have five emblems: The front line will have green emblems, the second row red emblems, the third row yellow emblems, the fourth row white emblems, and the fifth row black emblems.

“The next [rule] for regulating the troops is that anyone who loses his emblem will be executed. The first five lines place their emblems on their heads, the next five lines place their emblems on their necks, the next five on their chests, the next five on their stomachs, and the last five on their waists.<sup>131</sup> In this fashion it will never happen that the troops will have someone other than their own officers nor officers other than their own troops. If someone sees a case where it is incorrect but does not inquire about it, or sees confusion but does not act to stop it, the crime will be comparable to that of the offender.

“When the drums sound for [the troops] to move and engage in battle, those lines that move forward confront the danger, while those that retreat to the rear are reviled by the people. Those who venture forward past the five lines will be rewarded; those that race past the five lines to the rear will be executed. By this means it can be known that advancing and retreating, moving to the fore and rear are achievements of the commanders.<sup>132</sup> Thus it is said: ‘If you beat the drum and they advance like a thunderclap, they move like the wind and rain, no one will dare oppose you to the fore, no one will dare follow you to the rear.’ This speaks about having regulations.”

## 18. Orders for Restraining the Troops

“Gongs, drums, bells, and flags—these four each have their methods of employment. When the drums sound, the army should advance; when the drums are beat again, they should attack. When the gongs sound, they should stop; when the gongs are struck again, they should withdraw. Bells are used to transmit orders. When the flags point to the left, [the army should] go left; when the flags point to the right, then to the right. Unorthodox units are the opposite.<sup>133</sup>

“Beat the drum once and the left [foot steps forward]; beat it again and the right [foot advances].<sup>134</sup> If for each step there is one beat, this is the pace beat. If for ten steps there is one beat, this is the quickstep beat. If the sound is unbroken, this is the racing beat. The *shang* note is that of the general’s drum. The *chiao* note is that of a regimental commander’s drum. The small drum is that of a company commander. When the three drums sound together the generals, regimental commanders, and company commanders are all of one mind. The unorthodox army is the opposite of this.

“If a drummer misses a beat he is executed. Those that set up a clamor are executed. Those that do not obey the gongs, drums, bells, and flags but move by themselves are executed.

“When combat methods are taught to one hundred men, after their instruction is complete unite them [with other companies] to comprise one thousand men.<sup>135</sup> When the instruction of one thousand men is complete, unite them [with other regiments] to comprise ten thousand. When the instruction of [the armies of] ten thousand is complete, assemble them into the Three Armies. When the masses of the Three Armies can divide and unite, they can execute the methods of large-scale combat. When their instruction is complete, test them with maneuvers.

“In a square formation they are victorious; in a circular formation they are also victorious; in a jagged array they are also victorious; and if they encounter difficult terrain they will also emerge victorious. If the enemy is in the mountains, climb up after him. If the enemy is in the depths, plunge in after him. Seek the enemy as if searching for a lost child, follow him without any doubt. In this way you will be able to defeat the enemy and control his fate.

“Now one must make decisions early and determine plans beforehand. If plans are not first determined, if intentions are not decided early, then neither advancing nor retreating will be ordered. When doubts arise defeat is certain. Thus an orthodox army values being first; an unorthodox army values being afterward. Sometimes being first, sometimes being afterward—[this is the way] to control the enemy. Generals throughout the ages who have not known this method, after receiving their commission to go forward, were first to launch an attack—relying on courage alone. There were none who were not defeated.

“Their actions seem hesitant but are not; their movements seem to be confident but are not; their movement is at times slow, at times rapid, but is neither slow nor rapid. These three present entanglements in battle.”

## 19. Orders for the General

“When the commanding general is about to receive his commission, the ruler must first discuss military strategy in the ancestral temple, then issue the order in the court. The ruler personally grants the *fu* and *yüeh* axes to the general,<sup>136</sup> saying: ‘The Left, Right, and Central armies have their separate responsibilities. If anyone oversteps the bounds of their responsibility to seek the intercession of higher ranks, he shall be put to death. Within the army there cannot be two [sources of] orders. Anyone who issues a second order

shall be executed. Anyone who delays the implementation of an order shall be executed. Anyone who disobeys an order shall be executed.'

"The General of the Army makes the announcement: 'To those about to go out beyond the gates of the state [capital], the time [for assembling] is set as midday. Within the encampment we shall set up a gnomon and place it at the axle gate. Those who arrive past the designated time will be subject to the provisions of the law.'<sup>137</sup>

"When the General of the Army has entered the encampment, he closes the gate and has the streets cleared. Anyone that dares to travel through them will be executed. Anyone that dares to talk in a loud voice will be executed. Those that do not follow orders will be executed."

## 20. Orders for the Vanguard

"What is referred to as 'the vanguard'<sup>138</sup> moves off from the main force about one hundred *li*, assembling at a designated place and an appointed time. It carries a three-day [supply of] prepared food. It moves in front of the main army. Pennants are made for uniting to engage in battle.<sup>139</sup> Then when a pennant for engaging in battle is raised,<sup>140</sup> the vanguard feasts its soldiers<sup>141</sup> and has them deploy into a strategic configuration of power [*shih*] for battle. They are referred to as 'racing to battle.'

"The advance army moves in front of the vanguard. When the pennant for engaging in battle is raised, it moves off from the main force double the [vanguard's] distance—about one hundred *li* ahead of the vanguard—assembling at a designated place and time. They carry a six-day [supply of] prepared food. They are ordered to prepare for the battle and deploy troops to occupy the strategic positions. If the battle turns to the [army's] advantage, they pursue the retreating enemy; if the forces are stalemated, they race into [the enemy]. If the vanguard encounters anyone who has turned back, they should execute him. What are termed the 'armies of the various generals,' consisting of four unorthodox forces,<sup>142</sup> will wrest victory.

"The army has its squads of ten and five and [the methods of] dividing and reuniting. Before [engaging in battle] duties are assigned, and designated units should occupy the strategic locations, passes, and bridges. When the pennant for uniting to engage in battle is raised, they should all assemble. The main army sets out with a fixed daily ration and their combat equipment all complete. The orders are issued and they move; anyone who does not follow orders is executed.

"Now determine and assign forces to the strategic points within the four borders of the state. After the advance army and vanguard have already set

out, the people within the borders are not able to move about. Those who have received the king's commands, who have been given and carry the proper tallies and tokens are called 'officers acting in accord with their duties.' Officers who are not acting in accord with their duties but yet move about should be executed. When the pennant for uniting to engage in battle is raised, these officers—acting in accord with their duties—travel about and are employed to ensure that affairs are mutually regulated.<sup>143</sup> Accordingly, one who wants to wage warfare must first secure the interior.”

## 21. Military Instructions I

“Orders for instructing the soldiers: Disperse them to their encampments, and have them assume formation. Those who advance or retreat contrary to orders should be punished for the crime of contravening instructions.

“The front lines are instructed [by the commander of] the front lines; the rear lines are instructed [by the commander of] the rear lines; the lines to the left are instructed [by the commander of] the lines on the left; the lines to the right are instructed [by the commander of] the lines to the right. When all five men [in a line] have been successfully instructed, their squad leader is rewarded. Failing to successfully instruct all of them will result in [being punished] as though one had committed the crime of contravening instructions.<sup>144</sup> If someone who has fallen ill<sup>145</sup> brings it to the attention of the squad by himself and the squad members jointly report it, they will be spared from punishment.

“In general, when the squad of five assumes formation for battle, if one of the men does not advance and face death at the enemy, his instructor [will be punished] as if he had committed the crime of contravening the law. The double squad of ten guarantees the ten men within it. If they lose a man and the other nine men do not fight to the death in a desperate battle with the enemy, then their instructor [will be punished] as if he had committed the crime of contravening the law. From the double squad up to the subordinate generals, if anyone does not follow the laws, their instructors [will be punished] as if they had committed the crime of contravening the law. In general, to make punishments and fines clear and incentives and rewards correct, they must fall within the laws for instructing the soldiers.

“Generals have different flags, companies have different emblems. The Army of the Left wears their emblems on the left shoulder; the Army of the Right wears their emblems on the right shoulder; the Central Army wears their emblems on the front of the chest. Record their emblems as ‘a certain armored soldier’ and ‘a certain officer.’ From front to rear, for [each platoon

accordingly lower and lower.<sup>146</sup>

“The squad leader instructs the other four men using a board as a drum, a piece of tile as a gong, and a branch as a flag. When he strikes the drum they should advance; when he lowers the flag they should race forward; when he strikes the gong they should withdraw. When he points [left] they should go to the left; when he points [right] they should go to the right. When the gongs and drums are struck together they should sit.

“When the squad leader has completed instructing the squad, they should be united [with another squad] under a leader for a double squad of ten. When the double squad leader has completed instructing them, they should be united under a platoon commander. When the platoon commander has completed instructing them, they should be united under a company commander. When the company commander has completed instructing them, they should be united under an army commandant.<sup>147</sup> When the army commandant has completed instructing them, they should be united under a subordinate general. When the subordinate general has completed instructing them, they should be united under the commanding general.

“When the commanding general has completed instructing them, he has them deploy into formation in the countryside. He sets up three large posts, one every hundred paces, and has the formation move away from them. They advance one hundred paces and practice weaponry.<sup>148</sup> They quickstep for a hundred paces and then race for another hundred paces. They practice battle tactics in order to attain the measure [set by the general]. Afterward, rewards and punishments should be implemented.

“From the commandant down, every officer has a flag. When the battle has been won, in each case look at the rank of the flags that have been captured in order to stimulate their hearts with clear rewards.<sup>149</sup>

“Victory in war lies in establishing awesomeness. Establishing awesomeness lies in uniting strength.<sup>150</sup> Uniting strength lies in rectifying punishments. By rectifying punishments rewards are illuminated.

“Today if the people turn their backs to the border gates and decide the issue of life and death, if they have been taught to die without hesitation there is a reason.<sup>151</sup> [Training and instructions] have caused the defenders to inevitably be solid; those engaged in battle to inevitably fight; perverse plans not to be put into action; perverse people not to speak; orders to be effected without any changes; the army to advance without doubt; and the light units to be like a clap of thunder—to rush at the enemy like the terrified. Raise those of merit, distinguish those of virtue, making their distinction as clear as black and white. Cause the people to follow the orders of their superiors just as the four limbs respond to the mind.

“If the forward units break up the enemy’s ranks, throw his formation into chaos, and crush his hardness like water bursting through, there is a basis for it. This is termed the ‘army’s instructions.’ They provide the means to open sealed borders, preserve the altars of state, eliminate disaster and harm, and complete Martial Virtue.”

## 22. Military Instructions II

“I have heard that a ruler of men must attain the Tao of certain victory. Thus to be able to unite others and become expansive and great, to unify the ordinances and regulations and have his awesomeness prevail in the world, there are twelve essential matters:

“The first is called ‘connected punishment’ and refers to the method of joint criminal responsibility for all members of the squad of five.

“The second is ‘terrain restrictions,’ which refers to prohibiting and stopping passage along the roads in order to ensnare external, perverse forces.

“The third, ‘preserving the chariots,’<sup>152</sup> refers to the chariot commanders and infantry leaders being mutually dependent, the three [officers in the chariot] and the squads of five being cohesive in order to bind them together.

“The fourth, ‘opening and plugging up,’<sup>153</sup> refers to dividing the terrain with boundaries and having each man die performing his appointed function, securely defending his position.

“The fifth, ‘demarking boundaries,’ refers to the left and right restraining each other, front and rear awaiting each other, and a wall of chariots creating a solid defense in order to oppose the enemy and stop [them].<sup>154</sup>

“The sixth, ‘commands are distinguished,’ refers to the forward rows concentrating on advancing, thereby being distinguished from those in the rear who are not able to compete to be the first to ascend<sup>155</sup> nor overstep their positions.

“The seventh, ‘five emblems,’ refers to distinguishing the rows [with emblems] so that the troops will not be disordered.<sup>156</sup>

“The eighth, ‘preserving the units,’ refers to the units breaking up and following each other, each having their appointed sections.

“The ninth, ‘gongs and drums,’ refers to stimulating them to achievement and compelling them to virtue.

“The tenth, ‘arraying the chariots,’ refers to making the formation tight, with the spears deployed to the front,<sup>157</sup> and putting blinders on the horses’ eyes.

“The eleventh, ‘warriors of death,’ refers to selecting the talented and wise<sup>158</sup> from among masses of the army to ride in the war chariots. They race

forward and back, across and about, using unorthodox tactics to gain mastery over the enemy.

"The twelfth, 'strong troops,' refers to regulating the flags<sup>159</sup> and preserving the units. Without the flags [signaling an order], they do not move.

"When the instructions for these twelve have been successfully taught, anyone who contravenes an order should not be pardoned. If the army is weak, they will be able to strengthen it. If a ruler is unknown, they will be able to honor him. If orders become enervated, they will be able to revitalize them. If the people become migrants, they will be able to attract them. If the people are numerous, they will be able to govern them. If the territory is vast, they will be able to defend it. Without the state's chariots crossing the thresholds nor the variegated armor being taken out of the storage bags, your awesomeness will cause All under Heaven to submit.

"Soldiers have five defining commitments:<sup>160</sup> For their general they forget their families; when they cross the border they forget their relatives; when they confront the enemy they forget themselves; when they are committed to die they will live; urgently seeking victory is the lowest. One hundred men willing to suffer the pain of a blade can penetrate a line and cause chaos in a formation. One thousand men willing to suffer the pain of a blade can seize the enemy and kill its general. Ten thousand men willing to suffer the pain of a blade can transverse under Heaven at will."

King Wu asked T'ai Kung Wang: "In a short time<sup>161</sup> I want to exhaustively attain the essentials of employing men." Wang replied: "Your rewards should be like mountains, your punishments like valleys. The supreme makes no errors, the next corrects his mistakes.<sup>162</sup> Now anyone who, when about to be punished, requests that he not be punished should die. Anyone who, when about to be rewarded, requests that he not be rewarded should die."<sup>163</sup>

"Attack a country according to its changes.<sup>164</sup> Display riches in order to observe their poverty. Display exhaustion in order to observe their illness. If the ruler is immoral and the people disaffected, in cases such as these one has a basis for attack.

"In general, whenever about to mobilize the army, you must first investigate the strategic balance of power [*ch'üan*] both within and without the borders in order to calculate whether to mount a campaign. [You must know] whether the army is well prepared or suffers from inadequacies, whether there is a surplus or shortage of foodstuffs. You must determine the routes for advancing and returning. Only thereafter can you mobilize the army to attack the chaotic and be certain of being able to enter his state.

"If the territory is vast but the cities small, you must first occupy their land. If the cities are large but the land narrow, you must first attack their cit-

ies. If the country is vast and the populace few, then isolate their strategic points. If the land is confined but the people numerous, then construct high mounds in order to overlook them. Do not destroy their material profits nor seize the people's agricultural seasons. Be magnanimous toward his government [officials], stabilize [the people's] occupations, and provide relief for their impoverished for then [your Virtue] will be sufficient to overspread All under Heaven.

"Today warring states attack each other and mount large-scale assaults on the virtuous. From the squads to the platoons, from the platoons to the army, none have unified orders. They cause the people to have unsettled minds; they only incline toward arrogance and extravagance. Their plans are calamities; they are constantly involved in disputes, so the officers spend their time investigating matters. These are entanglements and moreover bring about defeat. Even after the sun has set the road remains long, and when [the soldiers] return to camp they are dispirited. The army is old, the general covetous. Since he will fight to seize material gains, he is easily defeated.

"When the general is light, the fortifications low, and the people's minds unstable, they can be attacked. If the general is weighty and the fortifications are high but the masses are afraid, they can be encircled. In general, whenever you encircle someone you must provide them with a prospect for some minor advantage, causing them to become weaker day by day.<sup>165</sup> Then the defenders will be forced to reduce their rations until they have nothing to eat. When their masses fight with each other at night, they are terrified. If the masses avoid their work, they have become disaffected.<sup>166</sup> If they just wait for others to come and rescue them and when the time for battle arrives they are tense, they have all lost their will<sup>167</sup> and are dispirited. Dispirit defeats an army; distorted plans defeat a state."

### 23. Army Orders<sup>168</sup> I

"Weapons are inauspicious implements. Conflict is a contrary Virtue.<sup>169</sup> All affairs must have their foundation. Therefore when a true king attacks the brutal and chaotic, he takes benevolence and righteousness as the foundation for it. [At the present time] the warring states then establish their awesomeness, resist their enemies, and plot against each other. Thus they cannot abandon their armies.

"The military takes the martial as its trunk, and takes the civil as its seed.<sup>170</sup> It makes the martial its exterior, and the civil the interior. One who can investigate and fathom the two will know victory and defeat. The civil is



the means to discern benefit and harm, to discriminate security and danger. The martial is the means to contravene a strong enemy, to forcefully attack and defend.

“One who is unified will be victorious;<sup>171</sup> one who is beset by dissension will be defeated. When formations are tight they are solid; when the front is dispersed it can attain its [objectives].<sup>172</sup> One whose troops fear their general far more than the enemy will be victorious. One whose troops fear the enemy far more than their general will be defeated. Thus to know who will be victorious, who defeated, weight your general with the enemy. The enemy and your general are like a steelyard and balance. If [the general] is settled and quiet, [the troops] are well-ordered; if he is brutal and hasty, they are in chaos.<sup>173</sup>

“Sending troops forth and deploying the army have standard orders; the dispersal and density of the lines and squads have standard methods; and arraying the rows from front to rear has its appropriateness and suitability. Standard orders are not employed when pursuing a fleeing enemy or suddenly striking a city. If the front and rear are disordered, then [the army] loses [its integrity]. If anyone causes confusion among the lines, behead him.

“The standard deployment for formations is always facing toward the enemy. There are also internally oriented formations, externally oriented formations, standing formations, and sitting formations. Internally oriented formations provide the means to preserve the center; externally oriented formations provide the means to prepare against external threats. Standing formations are the means to move, sitting formations the means to stop. Mixed formations—with some soldiers standing, others sitting—respond to each other in accord with the need to move or stop, with the general being in the middle. The weapons of the seated soldiers are the sword and ax; the weapons of the standing soldiers are the spear-tipped halberd and crossbow; the general also occupies the middle.

“Those who excel at repulsing the enemy first join battle with orthodox troops, then [use unorthodox ones] to control them. This is the technique for certain victory.

“Array the *fu* and *yüeh* axes [for punishment], make a display of the emblems and flags [used as rewards]. Those who have merit must be rewarded; those who contravene orders must die. The preservation or destruction of the state and the life or death of the soldiers lie at the tips of the [general's] drumsticks. Even though there are those under Heaven who excel at commanding armies, no one will be able to repulse them.

“Before arrows have been shot and cross in flight, before the long blades have clashed, those who yell out first are termed ‘vacuous,’ those who yell

out afterward are termed 'substantial,' and those who do not yell are termed 'secretive.' 'Vacuous' and 'substantial' are the embodiment of warfare."

## 24. Army Orders<sup>174</sup> II

"Units are dispatched from the main army to undertake advance preparations for defense. They should set up observation posts along the borders every three to five *li*. When they hear that the main army is making preparations to advance, mount a defense, and engage in battle, they should prohibit all movement in order to provide security to the state.

"When troops from the interior are about to set out for border duty, have the commanding officer provide them with their flags, drums, halberds, and armor. On the day for issuing forth, anyone who arrives after the commanding officer has gone out beyond the district border shall be liable for the law for late arrival for border duty.

"The term of border duty for a soldier is one year. Anyone who leaves before being replaced shall be punished analogously to the law for deserting the army. If his parents, wife, or children know about it, they will share the crime with him. If they do not know about it, pardon them.

"If a soldier arrives at the headquarters of the Grand General a day after his commanding officer, his parents, wife, and children should all share the crime with him. If a soldier abandons his post to return home for a day and his parents, wife, or children do not arrest [him], hold him, or report it, they should also share the crime with him.

"If they should lose their commanding officer in battle, or if their commanding officer should abandon his troops and flee by himself, behead them all. If a forward officer should abandon his troops and flee, any officer to the rear who is able to kill him and reassemble his troops should be rewarded. Anyone [among such troops] who has not achieved merit within the army must serve three years at the border.<sup>175</sup>

"If the Three Armies engage in a major battle and the Grand General dies, all of the subordinate officers commanding units of more than five hundred men who were not able to fight to the death with the enemy should be beheaded. All the troops near to the commanding general, on the left and right in [protective] formation, should be beheaded. As for the remaining officers and men in the army, those who have military merit should be reduced one grade. Those who do not have military merit should be rescripted to three years' border duty.

"If the squad of five loses a man in battle, or if a squad member dies in battle but they do not retrieve his corpse, then take away all the merit of all his

squad members. If they retrieve his corpse, then their crimes should all be pardoned.

“The army’s advantage and disadvantage lie with name and substance [cohering throughout] the state. Today if a person’s name appears as holding a particular [military] office but in reality he is at home, then the office has not gained the substance [of his presence], and the household has not gained the [registration of] his name. When troops are assembled to compose an army, it will have an empty name without substance. Outside the state it will be inadequate to repel enemies, while within the borders it will be inadequate to defend the state. This is the way in which the army becomes insufficient, in which the general has his awesomeness taken away.

“I believe that when soldiers abandon their units and return home, the other members of their squad in the same barracks and their officers should be punished for taking their rations for their own consumption, [the deserters’] names being shown as the army’s substance. Thus a person is nominally with the army, but in reality double the ration is expended.<sup>176</sup> The resources of the state are then empty, and the harvests of the people are naturally exhausted. How can the disaster of defeat be avoided?

“Today if they are stopped from returning home by the laws, this prevents the loss of an army and is the first military victory. When the squads of five and ten are mutually bound to the point that in battle the troops and officers will aid each other, this is the second military victory. If the general is able to establish his awesomeness, the soldiers to master and follow their instructions, while the commands and orders are clear and trusted, and attacking and defending are both properly executed, this is the third military victory.

“I have heard that in antiquity those who excelled in employing the army could [bear to] kill<sup>177</sup> half of their officers and soldiers. The next could kill thirty percent and the lowest ten percent. The awesomeness of one who could sacrifice half of his troops affected all within the Four Seas. The strength of one who could sacrifice thirty percent could be applied to the feudal lords. The orders of one who could sacrifice ten percent would be implemented among his officers and troops. Thus I say that a mass of a hundred ten thousands that does not follow orders is not as good as ten thousand men who fight. Ten thousand men who fight are not as good as one hundred men who are truly aroused.

“When rewards are like the sun and moon, credibility is like the four seasons, orders are like the *fu* and *yüeh* axes, and regulations are as [sharp as the famous sword] *Kan-chiang*, I have never heard of officers and troops not following orders!”